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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, December 14, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Holiday Sweets". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes Revised," "Honey and Its
Uses in the Home."

--ooOoo--

Have you your radio cookbook handy this morning? You may want to glance at it now and then as we talk for we'll refer to goodthings in it often today.

I've promised to talk about holiday sweets to make at home today, didn't I? And that, of course, suggests gifts from the kitchen--last-minute gifts I guess we'd better call them since this is the week before Christmas.

Did you ever consider why some Christmas presents are successful and others are failures? It's not the cost that makes a gift successful. It's not the time and effort spent on it, either. And in spite of all that's said about the spirit behind the gift, not even good will and generosity always will insure a hearty welcome.

It's wise selection that makes a gift successful, whether its cost is reckoned in dimes or dollars and whether it's made at home or purchased in a smart shop. The welcome gift suits the person who receives it, suits his taste and his needs. If, added to that, the gift is unusual and different, it is just that much more acceptable.

Homemade Christmas gifts, sad as it seems to mention it, are sometimes most unsuccessful. There was, for example, the fancy-work bedspread Cousin Susan once made for Uncle Ebenezer. It took her months of patient effort to make that bedspread. She embroidered morning glories and daffodils and roses and geraniums and all sorts of other flowers all over it. And she put a good deal of expense into the materials for it. As she said, it was just the kind of a gift that she would like herself, so she was happy to give it to Uncle Ebenezer.

But, unfortunately, it wasn't a success as a gift. To begin with, Uncle Ebenezer has no taste for bedspreads. In the second place, he has a perfect horror of fancy work. And all the different colored flowers jarred on his nerves. The whole situation, so far as that gift was concerned, was painful to the entire family.

Even homemade gifts of food are not always successful. Take home-made candy, for example. A friend of mine decided one year to give boxes of candy made by herself to all her friends--gifts, she said, with a personal touch, which, incidentally, she hoped would be easy on her budget. Her experience in candy making up to that time had been limited to fudge. She spent days and days laboring over chocolate creams, fancy nougats and so forth. She spent dollars and dollars on materials to use in making them. But the candy, alas, turned out sad looking and sticky. She went to considerable expense for boxes, fancy paper, ribbons and so forth to pack the candy in. Even then it wasn't attractive looking. It had a painfully uninviting homemade appearance and, alas, it actually cost as much as the best chocolates to be bought in the stores.

If you are planning gifts of homemade food for your friends, why not choose something simple and easy to make, something delicious and, if possible, different? Unless you are an expert at chocolate creams or other fancy candies, why not choose something that you are sure of making easily and well? Something that is a bit of a novelty in the food line, perhaps? Or something that your friends have a special liking for? Or why not specialize on good things that can be made from inexpensive materials?

And here's where the radio cookbook comes in. There are a lot of ideas for successful Christmas gifts between the green covers of that book. There are the goodies to make from citrus fruits, for example. These fruits are inexpensive and plentiful and can be used in so many delicious products. The recipe for candied grapefruit or orange peel, given in the green cookbook, makes one of the most delicious tasting and tempting looking confections it has ever been my good fortune to meet. I know I'm telling the truth because I had some only a few days ago prepared exactly according to that recipe. Most people, even the hard-to-please kind, would enjoy an attractive gift box of this delicate, almost transparent fruit candy. And most people, men included, would welcome a jaunty little holiday box or basket containing half a dozen little jars of marmalade tied with a sprig of holly and a red ribbon. Six jars of amber marmalade, with just enough in each for one breakfast, should please the most particular person. This amber marmalade---isn't that a nice name?--- is made with one grapefruit, one orange and one lemon, sugar and salt. Simple, inexpensive, handsome and very good.

Some of the nicest last-minute gifts from the kitchen are jars of homemade mincemeat or pumpkin, all prepared and ready for the Christmas or New Years' pie. Pumpkin can be prepared according to the recipe for pumpkin pie in the cookbook-- cooked, sweetened and spiced. But don't add the milk. That can be done by your friend just before she bakes her pie. Mincemeat and prepared pumpkin, of course, will not keep in jars indefinitely unless they are properly canned, but the jars may be kept safely in the refrigerator during the holiday season.

Another suggestion. How about some small glasses of your best cranberry jelly all ready for the dinner tables of your friends?

Speaking of cranberries, have you ever dixed candied cranberries to give away as gifts? They are delicious in flavor and so bright and attractive in color that they make an excellent garnish for fruit cups, salads, desserts and so on, or as sweets to be eaten like candy. Candied cranberries will keep indefinitely, if they are stored in a tightly covered jar. The syrup left over after the cranberries are candied may be used as pudding sauce or

in fruit punch.

Another delicious candied fruit delicacy is chocolate coated candied apples. Directions are on page 126 and the recipe calls for honey. Honey, you know, is a useful, wholesome sweet, especially good for holiday use since it is such a favorite with children. It may often be used like sugar or maple syrup in cookies, candies, cakes and sauces.

It's about time to say something about holiday sweets made especially with the children in mind. Some of the most wholesome sweets for children are made with dried fruits. These sweets are not so rich in sugar as many other confections and they contain iron and other minerals useful in the growing child's diet. Dried fruit sweets, as well as all other sweets, should be served to youngsters, even on Christmas day, only as dessert or immediately after a meal, and, of course in limited quantities.

The menu today features as dessert Parisian sweets, excellent dried fruit confections. I'll give you, if you are ready now, the menu first. And then the recipe.

The first item on the bill of fare is Cheese souffle; then, Scalloped tomatoes; Crusty whole-wheat muffins; Cabbage and raw carrot salad; and for dessert; Parisian sweets; Fruit punch or sweet cider to drink; and Cracked nuts. The nuts can be served in a bowl. Give the children each a paper napkin to hold the shells. This will save litter and aid neatness at the table.

Maybe I'd better repeat that menu. Cheese souffle; Scalloped tomatoes; Cruty whole-wheat muffins; Cabbage and chopped raw carrot salad; Parisian sweets; Fruit punch or cider; Cracked nuts in their shells.

Parisian sweets are very easily made from just four things:

1/2 pound of figs
1/2 pound of dried apricots or seedless raisins
1/2 pound of nut meats, and
Confectioners' sugar

I'll list those four ingredients again. (Repeat.)

Wash and pick over the fruits, and combine with the nut meats. Grind through a meat chopper, using the medium knife. Roll out this mixture about one-half inch thick on a board sprinkled with confectioners' sugar. Cut into small pieces, or make balls and roll them in the powdered sugar. Store them in a tin box or a tight jar.

Tuesday: "Frosting the Cake."

